

Mayor Tom Moody  
Speech to Graduates  
Summer Quarter 1978 Class  
The Ohio State University

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Doctor Enarson, Members of the Board of Trustees, distinguished honorees, members of the faculty, those who are about to be graduated, families and friends. I think perhaps you can imagine the awe and the elation - sort of opposing emotions - which overwhelmed me when I was invited to give this address. Very quickly I turned to the subject of what I should say to the graduates of this University. In true legal fashion I looked for precedents, and I found to my amazement that I had not kept copies in my files of the addresses which were given at my own graduation ceremonies, or those which I attended for friends and relatives. So I turned to the inner recesses of my mind to think back to what those experiences were and to profit from them. When I turned to the inner recesses on this subject, I will tell you that I found very little. I came to the conclusion in thinking back about those memorable occasions that there were two distinct characteristics of graduation speeches and graduation ceremonies, and it occurred to me that those distinct characteristics were "too long" and "too hot." Ladies and gentlemen, my remarks today may not be too hot but I will assure you they shall not be too long. There is a temptation to take too much time to congratulate you upon the struggles which you have gone through to reach this particular day. I shall abbreviate that by saying to you "Heartfelt congratulations," not only from myself but from a whole world who rejoice really

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in the fact that you have somehow made it. Beyond that, there is a temptation to speak to you about the challenges of this world and your professions, your arts, your business careers and to wish you well and to inspire you to do a good job. Frankly, I am not very good at that and I doubt that you need it because you either already have plans or don't have plans and I can't cover both of those situations. Presumably each of you knows more about your capabilities and your goals than I could ever know. So I am simply going to wish you for the future good luck in the career which you have prepared yourself for, and then I should like to talk about some other things that are important in this world. Let me suggest to you that the very first one of these things to keep in mind is family. Some of you do not have at this point, most of you I should think, families for whom you must care in the sense of young families. All of you, I hope, have an older family which has cared for you and which has helped you, pushed you, goaded you, financed you with a very great goal in mind of this day occurring. And for those of you who have some feeling that this is not a very important occasion today, I would really offer to you this advice: be tender with your mothers and fathers, your uncles and aunts, because today may not mean very much to you but it certainly means a great deal to them. Be generous and kind to the old folks for this is not your day, it is their day. And I think they probably worked harder for it than you did. It is usually pretty safe for a politician to say something good about family but now I turn to a subject which is not quite so safe. That is the responsibility to be tender and solicitous about government.



To this day, after slightly more than 200 years, the American experiment in government remains a fragile thing. We do not think of it as fragile because we look upon our armed forces, our economic might, our collective strengths and it is easy and correct to say that we are the strongest nation in the world.

But our government remains at all levels a fragile experiment which the rest of the world continues to view with some skepticism. I have no sermon to preach about that but simply to say to you that whether that experiment is good or bad, whether that experiment is profitable or losing, whether that experiment is rewarding or penalizing, you are going to be paying for it and paying for it very dearly over these next years. But we need more from you than your tax dollars. We need from you the contribution that only you can make.

The great, great part of this country is its pluralism. Certainly there is no one in this group who is not within that definition of pluralistic society. We need your mind, your heart, your concern, your understanding, and your devotion, if there is to be a day in the future for others like you. And I would urge you not to confine your interest to great issues at the national level but rather to begin your interest with small issues at the local level so that you can practice and you can observe, and you can understand and then just as the twelfth grade follows the eleventh grade and the senior year follows the junior year, you may be prepared to deal with some of those greater issues. I would assure you, ladies and gentlemen, who have some apprehension about what

the future holds for you, that there is no cause for concern. From the fat years of middle age I can tell you that every business, every profession, every activity of every kind what I know about is actively searching for young people to take over those hard duties and to be rewarded with the compensations both monetary and otherwise that those duties do provide. Your only job as I see it is to provide evidence to that waiting, watching world that you can do, and that you want to do, what they know has to be done. I should like you to think for a moment about one or two of the issues in our great society. It is my conviction, and a horrible conviction, that despite the fact that today we have more people formally educated than ever before, despite the fact that our literacy rate is higher than ever before, despite the fact that our rhetoric is higher than ever before. we as a people have very little comprehension of our forms of government or of our system of economics. Today you are well familiar with the United States posture with regard to human rights as a world wide major issue. There are many people in this country who decry that as a policy, suggest that it is not a policy, suggest that it is something else entirely. What I would say to you is that human rights are to be revered and those persons who would attack human rights activities by saying that they are unaccompanied by human responsibilities have only a part of the picture, because while that may be true in some degree, the missing element is human capability. There cannot be an intelligent exercise of rights without capability. There cannot be



an allowing of the exercise of rights without an enlightened capability - which brings me to the question of institutions. It is popular in city language to talk about rehabilitation of the urban core; to talk about conservation of infra structure within our great cities; to talk about "Let's keep what we have and improve upon it," rather than build new. Obviously, I am very much interested in that concept but that concept is larger than buildings and neighborhoods within a city. That concept reaches out to every institution in this great nation. There is no institution in this country that is not in a sad state of disrepair. There is no institution in this country that does not need very substantial help. If you believe that I am talking only about money, I would hasten to point out that the first institution which is in sad disrepair is the family. The families, as we look at the statistics, are more split than ever before, but this is a wrong place in which to stop because it leaves one with the impression the families that are not split are sound institutions. A great many of them are not sound, even though they appear to be. You will be building families and as you build them, I pray to God that you will inculcate the sense of heritage and tradition in concept, that you will prepare the members of your family to carry on the traditions that are good and to reject the traditions that are bad, and to find for those bad or useless traditions better substitutes. Other institutions are in a sad state of disrepair: the public school system, the private school system, the system of higher education whether private or state funded. Doctor Enarson in his remarks at Miami University, spoke very clearly to that and I will not repeat it, but I would urge each of you

to read his address to the graduates of Miami University because he has described there the mantle of responsibility which all graduates of institutions should undertake, and willingly, and for a lifetime. Yes, I say to you that every institution needs repair, it needs willing hands, strong backs, great and open minds.

The work is there for you to do. These occasions are always so serious but I believe we spend too little time thinking about, rather selfishly, ourselves.

Graduates of this summer quarter 1978 class, it is common to speak about responsibility and about duty and about accomplishment but let me say to you, "Enjoy yourselves." This is a great world. You have seen much of it. I can assure you that there is very much more of it to see. Because you wear a cap and gown and because you'll have an impressive certificate to frame and hang on your wall, do not put behind you the pleasures of the senses, because sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste are ways of keeping yourself sane and human, and this world needs sane, human, well-adjusted people. Let me end by one small quotation from Thomas Hardy, "Let me enjoy the earth no less because the all enacting might that fashioned forth its loveliness, had other aims than my delight."

The world has other aims than your delight. May you enjoy it no less because of that. Good luck.